

00800

1986/06/05



BUREAU OF
INTELLIGENCE
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR Date: 6/10/97
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(U) CHINA: TRANSFORMING THE COMMUNIST PARTY--AN
UPHILL STRUGGLE

(C) Summary

China's leadership is attempting to ensure the continuation of its modernization policies into the 21st century by transforming the composition of its leading force--the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Since the death of Mao Zedong and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, perhaps as many as 12 million new members have been admitted to the party--some 4 million since 1983 alone.

Recruitment criteria now emphasize youth, education, technical expertise, and commitment to reform. Nevertheless, the cultural and educational level of the party membership as a whole remains low, and many leadership positions at all levels are still filled by elderly and poorly educated veterans. Moreover, despite a major effort that has been under way since 1983 to attract more intellectuals into the party, many young intellectuals are declining to join. They choose to focus their attention on developing professional and personal, rather than political, careers.

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(C) The Expanding Party Membership

According to available figures, the Chinese Communist Party expanded from 35 million members in 1977 to some 44 million as of April 1986, an increase of about 9 million (see appended table). Judging from estimates based on the 1982 national census, an average of perhaps 250,000 party members died each year during that decade, meaning that about 2.5 million members were recruited above the gross change in membership.

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Declassify: OADR (Greene, F.)

Report 1276-AR
June 5, 1986

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Every year, some party members resign or are removed for transgressions or inactivity. Figures on the number of those who leave the party are not available. The few figures released during the first stages of the party's rectification campaign in 1984, however, suggested that not more than 0.5 percent of those examined were expelled. If this percentage were maintained throughout the rectification effort, it would result in a total of about 250,000 party members removed. In April, however, Politburo member Hu Qili stated that during the past three years--i.e., during the rectification campaign--only 0.2-0.3 percent of party members--or 80,000-100,000 persons--were disciplined. Presumably far fewer were expelled. Taking into account those who resigned voluntarily, those removed for inactivity, and those removed "for cause," the number of party-leavers probably does not exceed 250,000 for the period 1977-86.

Thus, during the last decade the CCP probably recruited close to 12 million new members. Of them, more than one-third--in excess of 4 million--joined the party in 1985-86, while about 4.8 million joined between 1980 and 1984.

(C) Yearly Recruitment

Recruitment numbers appear to vary considerably from year to year. Between 1979 and 1982, some 4.6 million new members were recruited, or an average of 1.15 million per year. Between 1980 and 1984, a total of 4.8 million joined the party, according to Chinese figures, yielding an average yearly recruitment of about 960,000. Other available figures, however, show that recruitment in 1983 was about 800,000, while roughly 1 million new members joined each year in 1984 and 1985. Hu Qili revealed that party membership had reached 44 million, suggesting that some 2 million new members had been enrolled between October 1985 and April 1986.

(C) Composition of New Members

The composition of party recruits also varies over time. Recruitment of intellectuals--a major focus of CCP enrollment efforts since 1979--has increased substantially in recent years. For the period 1978-83, intellectuals accounted for less than 12 percent of all new party members. By 1982, however, they constituted about 24 percent of new recruits. The proportion dropped to 19 percent in 1983, but rose to about one-third in 1984. Intellectuals probably represented at least one-third of new party members in 1985 and 1986.

Similarly, available data suggest that the percentage of young recruits--those under age 35--has risen in recent years and now accounts for more than half of the total. Traditionally, the Communist Youth League (CYL) served as the principal feeding

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mechanism for party recruitment. Between 1977 and 1980, for example, 3.2 million CYL members joined the party. During that period, the party's rolls expanded by only 3 million. Including replacements of deceased members and those who left the party--an estimated 1 million persons--and expansion of membership, CYL candidates probably accounted for about 80 percent of all new party members during those years. According to limited Chinese data, about 560,000 CYL members joined the CCP in 1984, about 1 percent of the CYL's 49 million members--whose ages range from 14 to 28. This was about twice the proportion of the year before. An even larger percentage may have been admitted into the party in 1985.

(C) Upgrading Party Membership

Despite strenuous efforts to recruit "younger, better educated, more technically competent, and more revolutionary" members, the CCP remains rural in its social base and poorly educated. In 1983, 10 percent of new recruits were peasants, about 19 percent were intellectuals, and just over 1 percent were college students. Thus, 70 percent of new recruits in 1983 were workers, staff, cadres, or military personnel. In 1985, more than half of all party members lived in rural areas. Some 52-57 percent were classified by the Chinese as having a primary school education or less; about 10 percent were classified as illiterate. Only 4 percent--about 1.6 million--had a college education, while about 40 percent had high school-level training. The current emphasis on recruiting intellectuals into the party may, however, gradually transform the composition of the CCP's membership along the lines desired by top party leaders.

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(U) Appendix

Chinese Communist Party Membership, 1977-86

<u>Year</u>	<u>Members (millions)</u>	<u>National Crude Death Rate (per 1,000)</u>	<u>Projected Deaths (millions)^{1/}</u>
1977	35.0	7.65	0.268
1978	35.5 ^{2/}	7.52	0.270
1979	36.0	7.61	0.280
1980	38.0	7.65	0.288
1981	39.0	7.73	0.298
1982	39.0	7.89	0.312
1983	40.0	7.97	0.323
1984	40.0+	8.00	0.328
1985	42.0	8.00 ^{2/}	0.352
1986	44.0	--	--

^{1/} Correlation with other available data suggests that these estimates, based on the national crude death rate, probably overstate party mortality considerably. The sum of this column equals 2.719 million, not including 1986. This paper estimates total deaths during the decade at around 2.5 million.

^{2/} Estimate.

Sources: 1977 - Renmin Shouce, 1979; 1979 - Hongqi, No. 4, 1979; 1980 - Ming Pao, February 3, 1980; 1981 - Beijing Review, No. 28, 1981; 1982 - Documents of the 12th CCP Congress; 1983 - Renmin Ribao, June 27, 1983; 1984 - Xinhua, July 2, 1984; 1985 - Xinhua, October 15, 1985; 1986 - Hu Qili cited in South China Morning Post, April 20, 1986. Crude death rate - Judith Banister, "Population Policy and Trends in China, 1978-83," in China Quarterly, No. 100, December 1984.

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